

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Optimization of a density control factor accompanying formation of a patch image is executed every time a predetermined period of time elapses since the end of a preceding image forming operation. Since an image is formed at regular intervals in this manner, it is possible to suppress a density variation which is created as toner carried on a developer roller is left unused for long. This effect further improves when the developer roller is rotated idle prior to formation of a patch image or regularly at predetermined timing.

(Fig. 24)